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For the last few years, the permanent bureau of the International Statistical Institute, which M. Methorst superintends with so much care and intelligence, has been a good example of a useful and scrupulous centralization of statistical data compiled throughout the world.

It is undoubtedly of world-wide interest to enlarge as much as possible the field of international statistics. Through statistics the nations would become more closely united, for they would know one another better. If they are accurate and impartial, statistics are an important element in bringing about reciprocal acquaintance and mutual confidence. They furnish indexes desired by parliaments, books, or the press. But hitherto no admitted authority has given to those indexes the necessary attention, or has determined the extent of their use. Would it not be one of the benefits of the League of Nations if the degree of accuracy were increased concerning the principal facts of international life? And would it not be a benefit to have an organization which, in joining for a common labor the existing international organizations without interfering with their independence, and in unifying the coördination of international statistics, would prevent overlapping, waste of time, and confused methods, and would enlarge the classifications of international statistics?

The commission intrusted by the Council of the League of Nations with the study of the scheme for such an organization has laid down the basis for it, but it has made the plans sufficiently flexible to allow the new body to be harmoniously suited to the other structures of society.

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

By R. H. COATS, *Dominion Statistician for Canada*

A reference to the appointment of this Commission appeared in the QUARTERLY for September, 1920 (page 356). The Commission consisted of representatives of the following bodies, namely, the International Labor Office, the International Institute of Agriculture, the International Bureau of Commercial Statistics (Brussels), the International Institute of Commerce, and the International Statistical Institute, together with the following persons: Lucien March (France), R. H. Coats (Canada), J. de Elola (Spain), Luigi Bodio (Italy), A. W. Flux (Great Britain), and M. Marumo (Japan).

The terms of reference drawn up by the Secretary-General of the League, as interpretive of the minute of the Council of May, 1920, were as follows:

1. To advise the Council of the League of Nations with reference to:
 - (a) The extent to which the work of obtaining, collating, examining, and publishing international statistics is already carried out by international bodies;
 - (b) The extent to which the published and unpublished work undertaken by these bodies requires or will require further coördination.
2. To consider and report upon the desirability of instituting a central advisory council on statistics for the purpose of advising the League of Nations concerning the coördination and standardization of statistics, and, further, to report upon the constitution and duties of such a council, should its institution be recommended.
3. To consider and report upon the relationship of the existing international statistical institutions to the League of Nations.
4. To consider in what directions international statistics require further development and in what manner the League of Nations may profitably assist such development.

The discussions extended over eight meetings, with Senator Bodio as chairman. At an early stage a difference of opinion arose as to the scope of the questions submitted

to the Commission, one section regarding its business as limited to the constitution of an international advisory council on statistics, whilst the other (supported by the representative of the League Secretariat) held that the general principles which international statistical organization should follow, and the relation of the Secretariat thereto, should be taken under consideration. These and other differences developed into a Majority and a Minority Report. The resolutions supported by the Majority were as follows:

(1) *Whereas*, there already exists a certain number of independent international institutions which centralize and publish statistics, or which aim at unifying statistical methods and systems;

(2) *And whereas*, it is desirable to avoid overlapping and possible discrepancies in the figures representing the same phenomena;

(3) *And whereas*, the different organs of the League of Nations require to handle statistics of various kinds in the execution of their duty and it is extremely desirable that these various classes of statistical information should be collected on sound and properly coördinated statistical principles;

(4) The Commission is of opinion that there should be instituted by the League of Nations an International Commission of Statistics, the mission of which would be to advise the Council of the League of Nations upon the statistics of all kinds that are necessary for the League.

(5) The Commission is authorized

(a) To advise the League on all technical statistical questions;

(b) To assist the League to utilize to the utmost possible extent the work already carried out by international statistical organizations, and to assist those bodies by its advice to delimit their respective spheres; it would in each case, whenever possible, apply to the international institutions or offices which are concerned with the production of the said statistics, the said institutions to retain their autonomy;

(c) To make or transmit suggestions to the various governments through the Council of the League as to the standardization and improvement of official statistical material.

(6) The statistics produced should be delivered to the International Commission of Statistics in two copies, one of which should be transmitted to the International Institute of Statistics, in view of the suggestions that this institute might formulate from a scientific point of view and with a view to the standardization of methods.

(7) The expenses for statistics supplied at the special request of the commission by the institutes or international offices should be covered by the League of Nations.

(8) This Commission would be composed of 25 members, that is to say:

(a) Three delegates of the International Institute of Statistics and of its permanent bureau; 2 delegates of the International Institute of Agriculture; 2 delegates of the International Labor Office; 1 delegate of the International Bureau of Commercial Statistics; 1 delegate of the International Institute of Commerce; 1 delegate of the International Chamber of Commerce; 1 delegate of the Permanent Committee of Social Insurance; 1 delegate of the International Office of Hygiene; 1 delegate of the Universal Postal Union; 1 delegate of the International Telegraph Office;

(b) The Secretary-General or his delegate.

(c) The other members should be designated by the Executive Council of the League of Nations and should include representatives of the services which make or utilize statistics.

(9) The Commission shall meet whenever it may be considered desirable, or whenever it is convoked by the Council of the League of Nations. It shall meet at least once a year.

(10) In the intervals between its sessions it can delegate its powers to a permanent sub-committee composed of five of its members as a minimum, or seven as a maximum.

(11) It shall itself determine the conditions under which it delegates its powers to the permanent sub-committee.

The Minority Report, which was signed by Messrs. R. H. Coats, Royal Meeker (representing the International Labor office), and A. W. Flux, was as follows:

"The undersigned are unable to agree with the recommendations presented by the majority of the Commission. We are of the opinion that the step now imperatively

needed to unify and standardize international statistics is to establish within the organization of the League a statistical section corresponding to the other technical organizations set up in the League. This the majority of the Commission did not consider to come within the terms of the reference, an opinion with which we are unable to agree, in view of the precise explanations made on behalf of the Secretariat by its representative. If any doubt remained after these explanations, further formal instructions should have been obtained from the Secretariat.

"To the statistical section above-mentioned should be attached an advisory council of statistical experts, corresponding somewhat to the proposals of the majority but differing in essentials. We believe, moreover, that provision should be made for the constitution of a general statistical assembly representing the countries of the world. Especially objectionable do we consider the explicit provision in the plan submitted by the majority for reference by the proposed advisory council to another and a private organization, namely, the International Statistical Institute. Our chief objection, however, is to the putting forward of an advisory council as a body competent to perform the urgent and difficult task involved in the coördination and standardization of statistics. This task, we repeat, can only be carried out by a properly constituted permanent office. In general, we think the report of the majority leaves matters substantially as at the conclusion of the London Conference of August, 1919. In definite terms we recommend as follows:

1. That a statistical section should be set up within the Secretariat of the League of Nations whose duties would be:

- (a) To confer with the various sections of the League and other official international bodies as to the statistics required by them and to be collected by them or on their behalf;
- (b) To receive from the various sections of the League such statistics as may be collected by them;
- (c) To collect from governments or from other sources such additional statistics as may be required;
- (d) To publish such statistics as may be thought desirable.

2. That in the execution of these duties the Statistical Section of the League should be assisted by an Advisory Council constituted as hereafter specified, whose duties would be:

- (a) To advise the Section on all technical statistical questions;
- (b) To assist in utilizing the work of international statistical organizations and to make suggestions with a view to delimiting their respective statistical activities;
- (c) To advise the Section regarding the transmission of suggestions through the Council of the League to the various governments for the standardization and improvement of official statistics.

3. The Advisory Council should be composed as follows:

- (a) Each of the members of the Council of the League of Nations should be represented by one statistical expert;
- (b) Each of the following organizations should have one representative: the International Agricultural Institute, the International Labor Office, the Bureau of Commercial Statistics, and the Institute of Hygiene;
- (c) A representative of the International Statistical Institute;
- (d) A representative of the Secretary-General of the League who should be chairman of the Council.

4. There should be summoned at such times as may seem desirable, and, in general, at intervals not exceeding three years, a conference representing the statisticians of all nations to express their opinion upon matters of statistical importance. The agenda of such meetings should be circulated four months in advance of the meetings.

"In further explanation of the above, we would add the following suggestions:

"The Statistical Section of the Secretariat should be under a director and also an assistant director (in view of the heavy administrative task) and should otherwise be adequately staffed and equipped. Emphasis should be placed on the technical qualifications of the staff. The director should be the secretary of the Advisory Council.

"It is contemplated that the members of the Advisory Council under section 3 (a) would secure advice in reference to matters under consideration by consultation with the statistical experts of their respective nations.

"The Assembly should consist of a representative from each member of the League accompanied by an adviser or advisers if thought necessary, in order to permit of classes interested in the use as well as the production of statistics. An assembly

should be held within one year of the setting up of the statistical section. The primary object of the Assembly should be to bring international statistics into direct contact with the opinion of statisticians throughout the world, the assemblies and governing bodies of most existing international organizations being gatherings primarily of non-statisticians. On the side of statistical technique the records of the International Statistical Institute are evidence of the valuable results which flow from broad-based discussions; when such results are the product of official as well as private initiative, their practical application, it may be expected, will be more general. The Majority report makes no provision whereby every country may secure a voice in the formulation of international statistical policy.

"In conclusion we would emphasize the opinion that the problem of statistical organization should in the final analysis be approached as an entity, especially in a world-plan which is dependent upon the support of sovereign bodies not disposed to accept confused or wasteful methods, and that there should be recognition at the outset of the character of the working machinery which alone can accomplish that purpose."

The question of procedure offered considerable difficulties. At the end of the sessions the resolutions, as above set forth, were forwarded to the Council of the League, but it was decided that the drawing up of the Commission's report should be carried out by a member of the Majority, subsequent to the adjournment of the Commission, for submission to the individual members for comment thereon. The Minority members thereupon forwarded the statement above quoted to the Secretary-General of the League for presentation to the Council at the same time as the Majority resolutions.

The reports of the Commission were placed before the Council of the League at its meeting in Brussels during October and were by it referred back to the respective governments included in the League.

FRENCH WAR FINANCE

By FAITH M. WILLIAMS, *Federal Reserve Board*

The Division of Analysis and Research of the Federal Reserve Board has recently completed a study dealing with French war finance. The subject is of especial interest at the present time because of the effect of the French war debt upon present economic and political problems in Europe.

In France's 1920 budget the second largest item of expenditure is that for "the expenses of the public debt" which amounts to almost twelve billion francs. This figure, which is larger than the total French tax receipts in 1919, brought the budget for the "ordinary expenditures" of the French government last year up to almost twenty-two billion francs. In June, 1920, new taxes were enacted which are expected to yield enough revenue to balance this "ordinary budget." There remained, however, after this was done, the expenses connected with pensions, with war-time cost of living bonuses, and with the reconstruction of the devastated regions, which amounted to twenty-six billion francs. Of this amount twenty-one billions were regarded as eventually recoverable from Germany. It was necessary to meet this "extraordinary expenditure" by two internal loans. The 1921 budget contemplates spending 16 billion francs more in the devastated regions, and, in default of any considerable payments by Germany on reparations account, raising that amount by further loans. Since the French public debt now totals about 245 billion francs it does not seem astonishing that the French people do not look upon further additions to their debt with enthusiasm, and that they are very eager for payments from Germany to begin.

France entered the war with a comparatively insignificant internal debt (about 35 billion francs) and with large investments abroad. She begins the year 1921 with a debt at home and abroad which amounts to about 245 billion francs, calculating her